

Message Text

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ORIGIN SS-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /011 R

66611

DRAFTED BY: PM/ISO:MRDWORKEN:CW

APPROVED BY: PM/ISO:GTCHURCHILL

S/S-O:PKJOHNSON

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

INFO CINCPAC

S E C R E T STATE 049834

EXDIS MILITARY ADDRESSEE HANDLE AS SPECAT EXCLUSIVE

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

FOLLOWING REPEAT LONDON 0618 ACTION SECSTATE INFO

MUSCAT 15 JANUARY.

QUOTE

S E C R E T LONDON 00618

EXDIS

E.O.11652: XGDS-3

TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MU, UK

SUBJECT: USE OF MASIRAH AND ONGOING US-OMANI RELATION-
SHIP

REF: STATE 008369

SUMMARY: OMANIS ACCEPT OUR PREFERENCE FOR MASIRAH AND
ARE INFORMING BRITISH THAT SULTAN'S PERMISSION HAS BEEN
GRANTED. JANUARY 18 ACCEPTABLE FOR DELIVERY OF MILITARY
ITEMS TO OMAN AND AMBASSADOR MACKI BEING INSTRUCTED TO
SIGN LETTER OF AGREEMENT BY JANUARY 15. OMANIS WANT US

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TO USE OMAR IN LONDON AS CHANNEL ON ALL MILITARY

AND MILITARY SALES MATTERS, AND WE DO NOT SEE HOW THESE WISHES CAN BE CIRCUMVENTED. OMANIS ARE REACHING TOWARD USG, AND THIS IS BOUND TO MAKE BRITISH MORE SENSITIVE ON OMANI MATTERS THAN HERETOFORE (SEE SEPTTEL COMING). ACTION REQUESTED: DEPARTMENT'S REPLY AS TO TIMING OF PROPOSED DOD STUDY MISSION TO OMAN MENTIONED PARA 4 BELOW. END SUMMARY.

1. EMBOFF LAMBRAKIS CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER ZAWAWI TO DELIVER DEPARTMENT'S REPLY (REFTTEL) MORNING JANUARY 14. ZAWAWI HAD INVITED SULTAN'S COUNSELLOR YEHIA (PLEASE NOTE PREFERRED SPELLING) OMAR TO BE PRESENT, AND LATTER JOINED THEM AFTER A FEW MINUTES. IN INTERIM LAMBRAKIS EXPLAINED THAT REPLY BEING GIVEN TO ZAWAWI BECAUSE USG WISHED TO KEEP CONTACTS IN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS. SAME EXPLANATION MADE TO OMAR WHEN HE CAME IN. BOTH IN PRIVATE AND LATER IN OMAR'S PRESENCE, ZAWAWI DECLARED THAT USG COULD SAY TO OMAR ANYTHING IT COULD SAY TO ZAWAWI. OMAR, ZAWAWI, LANDON, AND OTHERS ARE OPERATING AS A TEAM AND KEEP EACH OTHER CLOSELY INFORMED. (COMMENT: THIS IS SUPPORTED BY LAMBRAKIS' EXPERIENCE WITH THEM ON FLIGHT TO AND FROM US.) OMAR MADE POINT THAT HE IS ON OMANI EMBASSY STAFF IN LONDON (LISTED AS COUNSELLOR FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS) AND THUS CONTACT THROUGH HIM WOULD BE IN DIPLOMATIC CHANNELS.

2. OMAR AND ZAWAWI ACCEPTED USG PREFERENCE FOR MASIRAH. ZAWAWI SAID HE WOULD INFORM HMG (THROUGH FCO) SAME EVENING THAT SULTAN HAS GRANTED PERMISSION FOR OCCASIONAL USE OF MASIRAH BY US MILITARY AIRCRAFT. ZAWAWI ALSO INDICATED HE WOULD NOT REPEAT NOT INFORM HMG OF US MILITARY EQUIPMENT SALE TO OMAN. HE AND OMAR INDICATED THAT (BRITISH) CIC OF OMANI FORCES WOULD BE INFORMED IN DUE COURSE THAT THE US EQUIPMENT IS THERE TO BE USED.

3. OMAR, IN ZAWAWI'S PRESENCE, THEN TOLD LAMBRAKIS THAT THE SULTAN HAS CHARGED HIM WITH COORDINATING THESE MILITARY MATTERS ON BEHALF OF SULTAN'S GOVERNMENT. OMAR, NOT ZAWAWI, HAD ACCOMPANIED SULTAN IN CALL ON US SECRETARY OF DEFENSE AND HAD BEEN TOLD BY SULTAN TO COORDINATE DETAILS

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WITH DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS. OMAR SAID ONE OF HIS JOBS IN LONDON IS TO OVERSEE MILITARY PROCUREMENT. HE THEREFORE ASKS THAT USG GO TO HIM ON ALL SUCH MATTERS (WHICH ZAWAWI CONFIRMED). OMAR SAID HE WILL KEEP ZAWAWI FULLY INFORMED. HOWEVER, THERE WERE "OTHERS" (READ BRITISH) IN OMANI MINISTRY OF DEFENSE WHO WOULD NOT BE INFORMED OF MANY MATTERS. ZAWAWI TRAVELS A GREAT DEAL AND MIGHT NOT BE IN MUSCAT TO DEAL WITH MILITARY

ITEMS THAT COME UP. THESE WOULD THEN EITHER BE LEFT TO CHANCE OR GO TO PEOPLE IN MOD WHO WERE NOT AWARE OF THEM. OMAR, ON THE CONTRARY, IS IN CONTINUING CONTACT WITH ZAWAWI AND CAN HANDLE MANY MATTERS ON HIS OWN. HE SHOULD BE THE CHANNEL USED. ZAWAWI CONFIRMED ALL THIS. IN REPLY TO QUERY, BOTH MEN ASKED THAT CHANNEL NOT REPEAT NOT BE AMBASSADOR IN WASHINGTON. HARCORT (NOTE SPELLING) WAS NOT A CHANNEL BUT WILL BE INFORMED AS NEEDED.

4. ZAWAWI AND OMAR WERE INTERESTED IN DETAILS OF AIR SHIPMENT OF US MILITARY ITEMS PER PARA 2 REFTEL. OMAR ASKED FOR THE LIST IN WRITING TO INFORM OMANI OFFICER MAJOR SALIM GHAJALI, WHO IS BEING CALLED TO LONDON FOR MILITARY MEETING OVER WHICH OMAR WILL PRESIDE IN LONDON

JANUARY 16. GHAJALI WILL FLY BACK TO OMAN TO BE ON HAND FOR ARRIVAL OF EQUIPMENT JANUARY 18. (SUBSEQUENTLY, IN RESPONSE TO STATE 8597, LAMBRAKIS SAW OMAR WHO TELEPHONED AILING LONDON AND ZAWAWI IN HIS PRESENCE AND OBTAINED AGREEMENT THAT ZAWAWI WOULD CALL AMBASSADOR MACKI TO AUTHORIZE SIGNATURE OF LETTER OF AGREEMENT.)

5. OMAR THEN REFERRED TO US DEFENSE DEPARTMENT MISSION WHICH DEPUTY SECRETARY CLEMENTS INFORMED HIM WOULD GO TO OMAN IN FEBRUARY, STOPPING BY LONDON TO SEE OMAR FIRST. ZAWAWI AND OMAR SAID INTENTION IS TO ATTACH MAJOR GHAJALI TO GROUP IN LONDON, AS ESCORT THROUGHOUT VISIT. OMAR ASKED WE TRANSMIT OMANI PREFERENCE THIS VISIT BE IN THE LAST TWO WEEKS OF FEBRUARY RATHER THAN EARLIER. (DEPARTMENT PLEASE CONFIRM.)

6. ZAWAWI THEN GAVE US BRIEF LECTURE ON PERFIDIOUS
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BRITISH. HE SAID BRITISH ATTITUDE DURING COLONEL MALONEY'S FACT-FINDING VISIT TO OMAN LAST YEAR HAD BEEN ONE OF CONTINUING SUSPICION THAT THIS AMERICAN "WISE GUY" WOULD TRY TO TELL THEM HOW TO RUN THE WAR. (COMMENT: THIS IS CONTRARY TO OUR IMPRESSION OF BRITISH ATTITUDE OBTAINED FROM MALONEY HIMSELF.) ZAWAWI SAID BRITISH WERE LACKADAISICAL IN PRESSING WAR AND ONLY SOUGHT OWN PROFIT. SULTAN WANTED TO END WAR FAST. OMAR CHIMED IN WITH ONE OF HIS LITANIES (TO WHICH LAMBRAKIS GOT ACCUSTOMED DURING TRIP) AGAINST THE BRITISH. HE SAID THEY WISHED TO MONOPOLIZE MILITARY SALES AND COMMERCE THROUGH THEIR PRESENCE IN OMAN. OMAR SAW HIS JOB IN LONDON AS ONE OF FENDING OFF MILITARY SALES PROPOSALS FOR BRITISH EQUIPMENT FROM BRITISH OFFICIALS AND OFFICERS IN OMAN AND GETTING BEST EQUIPMENT FOR THE PRICE

WHEREVER HE COULD FIND IT. THE US IS A FRUITFUL SOURCE.

7. COMMENT: WE ARE NO EXPERTS ON OMANI PALACE POLITICS AND CAN UNDERSTAND DEPARTMENT'S AVERSION TO DEALING THROUGH EXPATRIATE LIBYAN BUSINESSMAN WITH VARIETY OF ARAB CONNECTIONS AND PROBABLY MORE THAN ONE INTELLIGENCE TIE. ON OTHER HAND IT HAS BECOME ABUNDANTLY CLEAR TO US THAT HE HAS HIGH STANDING WITH SULTAN (EGYPTIAN PALACE PROTOCOL OFFICER FARGHAL WANTED TO PLACE OMAR AND SHAKER, AS PALACE COUNSELORS, ABOVE MINISTERS ZAWAWI AND RAJAB IN PROTOCOL ORDER DURING TRIP.) ZAWAWI AND OMAR HAVE SPECIFICALLY ASKED THAT WE DEAL THROUGH OMAR ON MILITARY AND MILITARY SALES MATTERS. COLONEL LANDON WILL REMAIN IN LONDON CONVALESCING FROM SERIOUS OPERATION AT LEAST A COUPLE OF MONTHS LONGER, AND WILL BE IN EASY REACH OF OMAR. THUS WE SEE NO ALTERNATIVE TO USING OMAR AS CHANNEL IN ACCORDANCE WITH OMANI GOVERNMENT PREFERENCE. (LAMBRAKIS WILL BE HAPPY TO DISCUSS PROCEDURE FURTHER WITH AMBASSADOR WOLLE WHEN HE STOPS BY LONDON. IT WOULD ALSO BE HELPFUL IF WE COULD HAVE MORE BIOGRAPHIC DATA ON OMAR FROM USG FILES.)

8. FURTHERMORE IT IS CLEAR THAT OMANIS ARE REACHING WITH BOTH HANDS FOR CLOSER POLITICAL AND COMMERCIAL TIES WITH USG. WE DOUBT USG WOULD WANT TO DISCOURAGE THEM (OR COULD DO SO WITHOUT RUNNING RISK OF OFFENDING THEM).
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BRITISH CAN BE EXPECTED TO BECOME INCREASINGLY SENSITIVE TO THIS LINE OF DEVELOPMENT. THIS IS AN ADDITIONAL REASON FOR CLOSE COORDINATION BETWEEN EMBASSY MUSCAT AND EMBASSY LONDON, WHERE SO MANY KEY ADVISERS TO SULTAN EITHER RESIDE OR VISIT FREQUENTLY.

9. FCO OFFICIALS' REACTION TO MASIRAH USE AND PROVISION OF TOW MISSILES FOLLOWS BY SEPTEL.

SPIERS UNQUOTE INGERSOLL

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY ASSISTANCE, MILITARY EQUIPMENT, MILITARY BASES, MILITARY SALES, MILITARY AGREEMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 05 MAR 1975
Decaption Date: 28 MAY 2004
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: RowellE0
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1975STATE049834
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: PM/ISO:MRDWORKEN:CW
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X3
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D750077-0845
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1975/newtext/t19750379/aaaactbr.tel
Line Count: 211
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ORIGIN SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 4
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 75 STATE 008369
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: RowellE0
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 NOV 2003
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: WITHDRAWN <20 JUN 2003 by SmithRJ, REFER TO DOD>; RELEASED <03 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>; APPROVED <03 NOV 2003 by RowellE0>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
05 JUL 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: USE OF MASIRAH AND ONGOING US-OMANI RELATION- SHIP
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, MU, UK, US
To: CINCPAC
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 05 JUL 2006